



presents

A NATIONAL YOUTH ORCHESTRA PRODUCTION

ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN

MUSIC DIRECTOR: ALEX PAUK

19 August, 1983 8:00pm Walter Hall
Edward Johnson Building
Toronto

PROGRAM

SONGS OF PARADISE (1983)

ALEXINA LOUIE
(b. 1949)

*ALCHEMIES (1983)
(World Première)

JOHN BURKE
(b. 1951)

INTERMISSION

PLAGES (1981)

SERGE GARANT
(b. 1929)

*VANISHING POINTS (1983)
(World Première)

JOHN REA
(b. 1944)

*Commissioned by the National Youth Orchestra with the
assistance of the Canada Council.

ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN

In keeping with a policy of benefiting the cultural heritage of Canada, Suncor Inc. proudly announces its sponsorship of ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN, a new orchestra devoted to the performance of recent Canadian music.

This unique venture provides an important opportunity for the country's young composers to receive much needed exposure of their work. It has as its focal point, the creation of a new repertoire which is accessible to the majority of orchestras in Canada.

The ensemble, conducted by Alex Pauk, is made up of highly skilled young professional musicians with a special interest in further familiarizing themselves with the sounds and techniques of Canada's newest repertoire.

In addition to the corporate sponsorship of Suncor Inc., this project is assisted through the kind support of the Canada Council. The commissions for this programme were initiated by the National Youth Orchestra of Canada which is also responsible for concert production.

PROGRAM NOTES

SONGS OF PARADISE (1983) -- ALEXINA LOUIE

Besides the more obvious programmatic elements of Songs of Paradise (the exotic, colourful depiction of the beauty and mystery of nature through shimmering percussion effects, fluttering in the strings, and the predominance of the woodwind section with its birdcalls and tremulous warblings), the composition is a glimpse into the beauty of the creative spirit, a paradise of the soul. From its misterioso opening and brass summonings, the work reveals its songs for full orchestra, violin solo, piano solo, as well as a hymn to the universe in the brasses. The various musical elements are recalled in the final segment of the work. Songs of Paradise was commissioned by the Thunder Bay Symphony through the kind assistance of the Canada Council.

(composer's note)

Alexina Louie, a native of Vancouver, holds an A.R.T.C. in piano performance, a Bachelor of Music Degree from the University of British Columbia, and a Masters Degree in Arts from the University of California at San Diego where she was awarded a Regent's Fellowship for studies in composition with Robert Erickson and Pauline Oliveros. Settling in Los Angeles, she taught synthesizer and electronic music composition for six years. As well as being the recipient of numerous awards, grants, commissions and prizes, Ms Louie has had her music performed and broadcast both in the United States and Europe.

Recent travels have taken her to Belgium for the première of her new two-piano composition Afterimages and to the Soviet Union where she also received performances of her music. In Canada her compositions have been played by the major new music ensembles.

Her works in progress include a work for 12 players titled Music for a Thousand Autumns (commissioned by la Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec - première in Montreal, October 6, 1983) and a piano concerto commissioned by CBC Radio.

Alexina Louie now lives in Toronto where her activities also include writing music for film and dance as well as teaching composition at the Royal Conservatory of Music.

ALCHEMIES (1983) -- JOHN BURKE

World Première

Alchemies continues the trend in my recent music toward a sparser sound and a more understated, allusive style. Because of this approach, the orchestral writing displays a transparency, use of solo instruments and rhythmic subtlety more typical of chamber music; and thus makes unusual demands on the players. Despite this, the basic idea of the piece is quite simple: a single chord, progressively becoming rhythmically agitated, is constantly opposed by lines and textures which display an irrepressible tendency to ascend. The resulting tension is finally resolved when the chord itself is made to rise into the highest reaches of the violin range.

(composer's note)

John Burke, Born in Toronto, received degrees in composition from McGill University and the University of Michigan where he earned his doctorate. During 1978-79 he studied in Europe on a Canada Council grant and after returning to Canada taught theory and electronic music at McGill University for two years. He is the recipient of numerous awards and honours including a total of four prizes in the CBC Radio Competition for Young Composers. Among his recent commissions is a work to be premièred in February by the CBC Vancouver Orchestra under the direction of Mario Bernardi.

PLAGES (1981) -- SERGE GARANT

In this case, the title Plages refers to the idea of bands or stripes of colour, texture, time and space. In sonic terms the "bands" of this piece might be likened to the "cuts" on a phonograph disc.

The piece represents a new direction for the composer in that he does not apply serial techniques but instead bases the piece on a single 5-note chord out of which all notes in the spectrum are organized - a kind of hyper-mode. Each section of the piece represents a different approach to the same material with varying techniques and treatments applied to pitch, rhythm, colour and volume, thus creating a dramatic progression of events.

Plages was commissioned by l'Orchestre des Jeunes du Québec and was given its first performance in Montreal on November 26, 1981.

Serge Garant is one of the foremost musical personalities in Canada. In championing contemporary music in this country and abroad he has conducted the premieres of numerous Canadian works. He continues with this activity in Montreal as music director of la Société de Musique Contemporaine du Québec, a position he has held since the formation of the organization in 1966.

Garant has written music for a wide variety of ensembles and has been acclaimed many times over for the vitality and originality of his music.

As a whole, Garant's work displays elements of proportion, harmony, sensitivity and precision in a balanced mixture of intellectualism and expression.

His viewpoint on the process of composition is perhaps summed up in the following words:

"Fundamentally, I have always thought - and still do - that no technique in itself can explain anything whatsoever. Technique explains nothing. The music is always behind it; it is always a kind of miracle, a kind of wondrous encounter which exists perhaps between certain ways of constructing and certain ways of feeling, with the result that the construction of a work ends up being not very important, yet in spite of it all, that way of feeling would not be there if the construction was not there also".

Serge Garant (Canada Music Book 9, P.25)

In 1980 Serge Garant received the Jules Léger Prize for his Quintet and the same year he was made a Member of the Order of Canada.

VANISHING POINTS (1983) -- JOHN REA
World Première

Vanishing Points is the last panel of a musical triptych which includes Hommage à Vasarely (1977) for orchestra and Treppenmusik (1982) for an ensemble of saxaphones, clarinets and strings. The visual arts have been the source of inspiration for all three works.

Hommage à Vasarely, as the title suggest, attempts a musical evocation of the geometrical patterns found in the work of Victor Vasarely (1908-), whereas Treppenmusik ("staircase music") draws upon the loop-like designs and illusions of the Dutch artist, M.C. Escher (1898-1972).

Vanishing Points, while not connected to any one artist's work in particular, nevertheless alludes to the "vanishing point(s)" often found in paintings. Quick moving melodies vanish and reappear in continuous accelerandi reminiscent of the perceptual effects in art resulting from the convergence of two or more lines in order to produce the impression of perspective.

The work is dedicated to Alex Pauk, the founder and conductor of Esprit Contemporain.

(composer's note)

Born in Toronto, John Rea studied composition with John Weinzweig and Gustav Ciamaga at the University of Toronto, and with Milton Babbitt at Princeton University.

Recipient of many awards and commissions, John Rea has written music in several genres: solo, chamber, music-theatre, orchestra, ballet, opera as well as electronic music.

Besides his activities as a composer, John Rea has lectured and published articles on 20th Century music and, since 1973, has taught composition and music theory at McGill University. Rea is also a founding member of two musical societies formed in Montreal in 1978: Les événements du neuf, dedicated to the performance of contemporary works, and Traditions musicales du monde, which promotes the appreciation of non-Western music through concerts and other activities.

Mr. Rea won the Jules Léger Prize for new chamber music in 1981 and will be composer-in-residence at Mannheim, Germany in 1984.

ESPRIT CONTEMPORAIN

Violin	Flute	Trumpet
Anne Rapson, concertmistress	Julie Ranti	Donald Schultz
Gordon Lucas	Janet Ogryzlo	John Kargut
Joan McDonald		
Anne Richard	Oboe	Trombone
Julia Ruby		
Marianne Urke	Ian Franklin	Paul Hawkshaw
Olga Ranzenhofer	Janet Page	Gordon Griffith
Josée Tellier		
Marc Sabat	Clarinet	Percussion
Viola	John Rapson	Carol Buehler
	Greg James	Bruce Brander
Larry Blackman		Dwight Bronson
David Wadley	Bassoon	
Andrew Bacon		Harp
	Claire Newman	
Cello	Leslie Magowan	Nathalie Teevin
John Helmers	Horn	Piano
Peter Rapson		
Shaun Pomer	Lise Vaugeois	Guy Few
	Raymond Bisha	
Bass	Diane Fair James	
	Jean-Marc Dugré	
Ralph Blackman		
David Ruby		
François Myrand		

The musicians playing for Esprit Contemporain perform professionally with the following ensembles:

Aeolos Brass Quintet
 Array Music
 Bonn Stadtsorchester
 Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra
 CBC Chamber Orchestra (Vancouver)
 Chicago Civic Orchestra
 CJRT Radio Orchestra
 Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
 Erste Österreichische (Vienna)
 Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra
 Kingston Symphony Orchestra
 Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra
 Mississauga Symphony Orchestra
 Montreal Symphony Orchestra
 National Ballet of Canada Orchestra
 Prince George Symphony Orchestra
 Regina Symphony Orchestra
 Royal Winnipeg Ballet Orchestra
 Saskatoon Symphony Orchestra
 Symphony Nova Scotia
 Trois Rivières Orchestra
 Vancouver Symphony Orchestra
 Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra

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We also give particular thanks to our 1983 session hosts, Queen's University Conference Office and Queen's University Music Department. The Performances are made possible by the additional co-operation of the American Federation of Musicians Locals 149 (Toronto) and 518 (Kingston); and the Performing Arts Office of Queen's University.